Bio

Captain Allen Gardiner R.N

Sailor and Martyr

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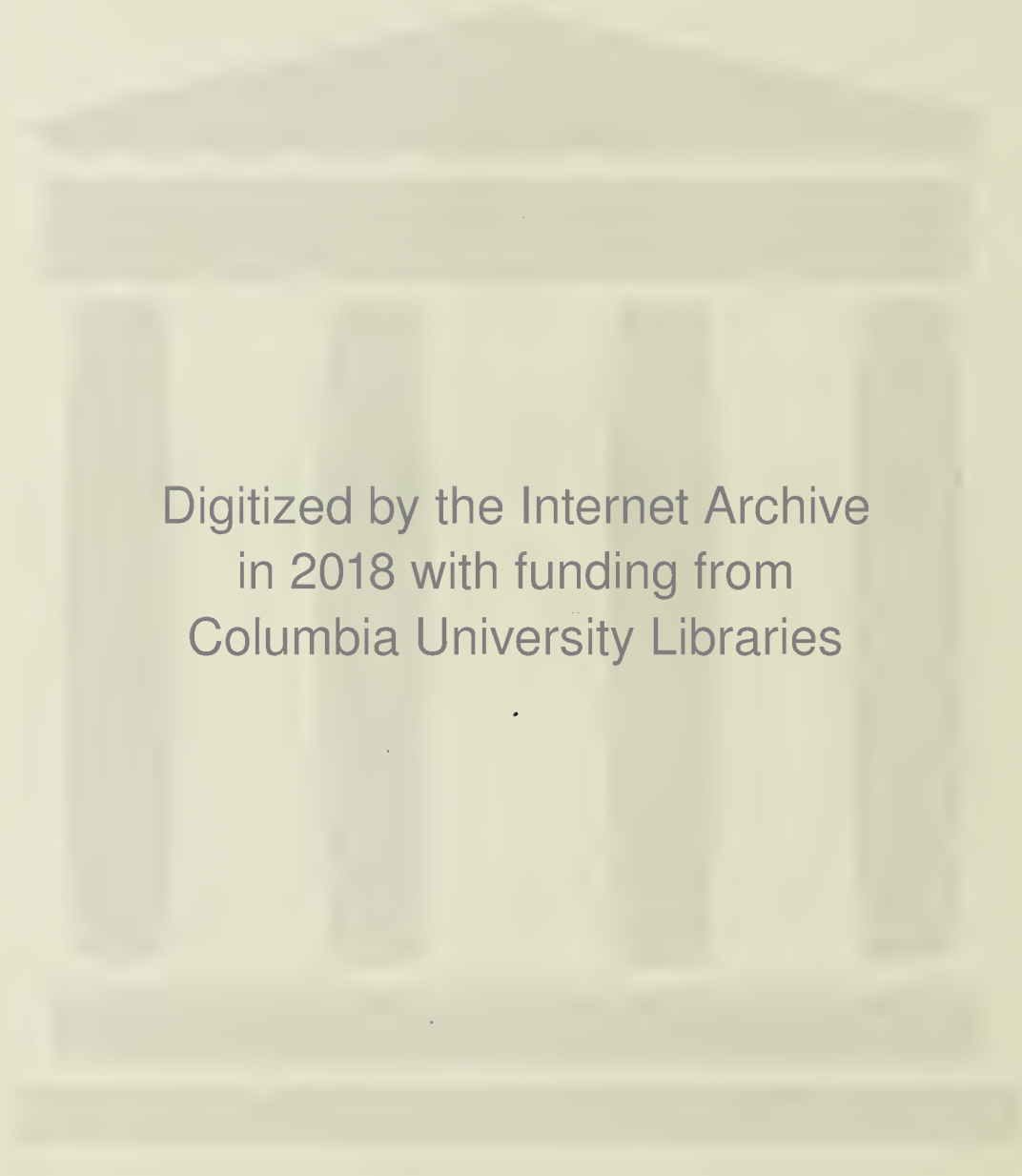
THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

CAPTAIN ALLEN F. GARDINER, R.N.



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Captain Allen F. Gardiner, R.N.

Gallant Captain of the Royal Navy.
Missionary Martyr of South America.

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THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
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Capt. Allen F. Gardiner, R.N.

Gallant Captain of the Royal Navy. Missionary Martyr of South America.

With Captain Allen F. Gardiner, the missionary work of the Church of England in the great Continent of South America really commenced.

Born at Basildon, Berks, in 1794, he from his earliest years showed the singular energy, keenness, and perseverance which marked all his life. "The boy was father to the man."

"From infancy," says his biographer, "he evinced a desire for travel and adventure, and so strong an inclination for the Navy, that after some opposition on the part of his parents, they were induced to yield to his wishes. On one occasion his mother, going as usual into her children's nursery before retiring to rest, was surprised to find her son Allen asleep on the floor. On being aroused, the child gave as his reason for not being in bed, that it was his intention when a man to travel all over the world, and therefore he wished to accustom himself to hardship."

THE ROYAL NAVY.

Allen Gardiner entered the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth in 1808, and served his country faithfully

as a sailor for many years. His first acquaintance with South America was when as a midshipman he took part in a sea-fight between the *Phœbe* and the *Essex*. On the *Essex* striking her flag, Gardiner was told off by his Captain to navigate the prize ship home to England. The task was a heavy one. His men were sick, the ship was battered and leaking, but Gardiner succeeded in bringing her home to port. In his naval career he fought for England on all the seven seas, yet he never forgot the religious instructions and impressions gained at his mother's knee, and while still a young man became a devoted Christian. Yet in those days he himself considered that he served God only in a "half-hearted way."

Family trials led, however, to a more complete personal surrender. By the death-bed of his first wife in 1834, he consecrated himself, heart and soul, to missionary work; and he nobly kept his vow to the very end of his life. To become a "pioneer missionary of a Christian mission to the most abandoned heathens" was henceforward the great aim of his life.

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES.

From this time he went through a constant succession of travels and adventures, with one grand object ever kept steadily in view. He visited Natal, he met Dingaan, the Zulu chieftain, face to face, he went to New Guinea and the islands of the Archipelago. Any of these travels would be worthy of a book, but in the few pages of this

little booklet we can only sketch the story of his last enterprises; of his earlier work, it must suffice to say that his name is held in hallowed memory in Durban, capital of Natal.

HIS THOUGHTS RETURN TO SOUTH AMERICA.

He married again, and his wife and children accompanied him on many long and perilous journeyings. After repeated disappointments in other countries, he was led to direct all his efforts to the natives of South America. In 1838 he proceeded with his family to Rio de Janeiro, thence to Buenos Aires, and across the Pampas to Mendoza in Argentina. From this point he crossed the Andes into Chile, hoping to commence work among the Mapuche Indians living in that part of Chile between the Bio Bio at Concepcion and Valdivia. These tribes, until the beginning of the last century, heroically maintained their independence against the armies of Spain and Chile. For more than two years, amid danger, anxiety and hardships, he made every effort to bring the Gospel to these magnificent Indians, but in vain. He was thwarted in all his efforts, and with deep regret—for he loved these people—he quitted the shores of Chile for

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

nese islands being under the British flag seemed a likely base from which to operate in Tierra del Fuego. There, accordingly, on December 23rd, 1841, he and

his family anchored in Berkeley Sound. A more treeless, cheerless, miserable place could hardly be imagined. There he chartered a small schooner and sailed for Gregory Bay on the north coast of Tierra del Fuego, where he arrived in March, 1842. No native being found there, he sailed to Oazy harbour where he found a party of 100 Indians, who were so friendly that he felt sure that the effort to found a mission would be followed by financial support on the part of the Church Missionary Society or one of the other great missionary societies. He therefore returned to England, but only to find that none of the existing missionary societies were able to help, being already overburdened with existing needs which they were compelled to meet.

THE PATAGONIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Denied the support on which he had counted, he founded at Brighton, on July 4th, 1844, the Patagonian Missionary Society, which was the precursor of the South American Missionary Society. Captain Gardiner himself was made the acting secretary, and set himself at once to organise an expedition to Tierra del Fuego. In February, 1845, he embarked on the brig *Rosalie*, with Mr. Robert Hunt, the master of an endowed school at Kendal, but once more found no rest for the soles of his feet, and was compelled to return to England, to the chagrin of the supporters of the mission. It was even suggested that the Society should be dissolved without delay. But the proposal was overruled, and in company

with a young Spaniard, Frederico Gonzalez, Captain Gardiner sailed from Liverpool, reaching Monte Video on November 24th, 1845, with the intention of crossing the continent from Buenos Aires to the haunts of the Indians near the slopes of the cordilleras. This proving impracticable, the two men proceeded by sea to Valparaiso.

BOLIVIA.

Similar conditions prevailing at Valparaiso, they took ship northwards to Cobija, at that time a Bolivian port. Accompanied by a guide they crossed the rainless desert of Atacama, and after a month's journey reached Tarija, the capital of the frontier province of that name. Difficulties arose, but the Bolivian government generously sanctioned a mission on two conditions, that the Society should confine its work to the aboriginals, and that the missionaries should make no attempt to proselytise. Gonzalez was left in Bolivia, and was later joined by Miguel Robles. Gardiner himself returned to England to make plans and to secure funds. Once more the Church Missionary Society was petitioned to take over the work of the Patagonian Missionary Society, but that great Missionary Society was with difficulty maintaining its existing work.

THE OPENING OF THE LAST CHAPTER.

Following that decision, Captain Gardiner and his friends felt that they could not give up the cause of Christ

among the aboriginals of South America. Meetings were held in London and the Captain travelled all over England and Scotland. A pathetic diary in his own handwriting tells the story of this campaign. Many meetings were held which produced only a few shillings each; expenses often exceeded the collections. Meetings were promised, which when Gardiner arrived had been allowed to fall through. Yet in spite of many disappointments he kept on.

He proposed to take four sailors, a dingey, a whale boat, two wigwam huts and supplies for six months. His plan was finally agreed to, and a passage was secured on the barque *Cylmene*, bound for Payta, in Peru, and the party sailed on January 7th, 1848. Alas! it required very little experience and but a short time to prove that the scheme was quite inadequate for a missionary enterprise in such a stormy latitude. Banner Cove, on Picton Island, was selected for the proposed Mission Station. Tremendous gales were experienced, and a landing was only effected with great difficulty. Having landed it was soon evident that without a vessel large enough to hold their provisions and property, nothing could be preserved from the pilfering hands of the fierce tribesmen. Very reluctantly tents were struck, and on April 1st, 1848, the missionaries were transferred to the *Clymene* and sailed for Payta and thence home.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE LAST VOYAGE.

Most men would have given up in despair, but not so Allen Gardiner. He returned to England, only to try

and induce his fellow countrymen to send out another expedition to Tierra del Fuego, better equipped than the last, with a brigantine or schooner in which to keep the provisions, and to which they might retire in case of need, and by means of which they might maintain communication with the Falkland Islands. Few were found to take his views. Once more he applied to various Missionary Societies in England and Scotland for help, but his appeals were again in vain. The unwearied man travelled again over England and Scotland, and but little progress was made. On Tuesday, March 5th, 1850, he received the promise of £700 from Miss Cook, of Cheltenham, who had responded in reply to an appeal from Dr. Maurice, the Chaplain of New College, Oxford. In his diary, Gardiner says : " This is the hand of God —I have prayed that His hand might be seen conspicuously in our behalf, and surely it is now distinctly visible." Anxious that there should be no further delay, Gardiner himself furnished £300 for the funds.

THE EQUIPMENT OF THE CREW.

He was unable to secure a brigantine, so slender were his resources, so he took two launches, 26 ft. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft., the *Speedwell* and the *Pioneer*, in which provisions for six months could be stowed. The crew was soon collected. Mr. Richard Williams, a surgeon at Burslem in Staffordshire, gave up his professional prospects to share the hardships of the expedition. Mr. John Maidment was a waiter, whose name had been sent in by the

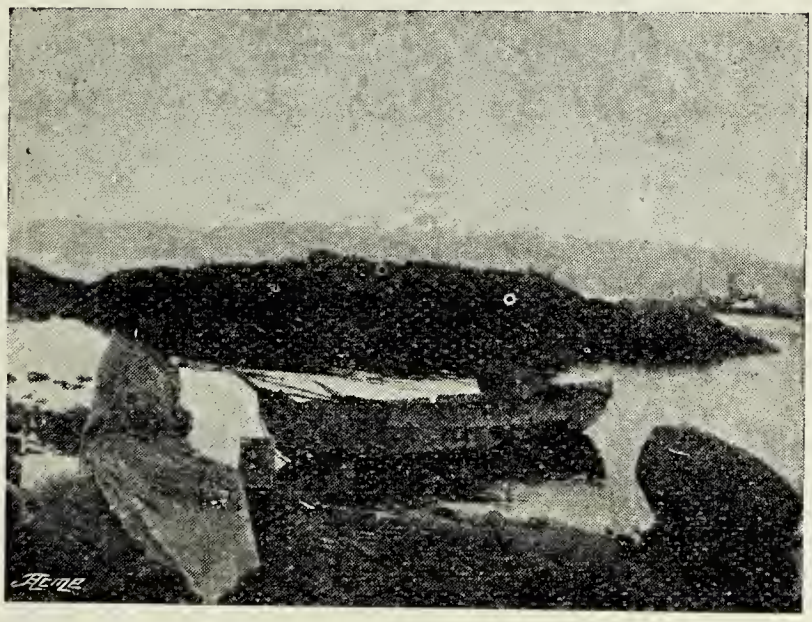
Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association. Joseph Erwin, a ship's carpenter, had been one of the former party, and volunteered again, saying that, "being with Captain Gardiner was like heaven on earth, he was such a man of prayer." Three Cornish fishermen, John Pearce, John Badcock and John Bryant, completed the party. These seven brave men, each a hero—the naval officer, the doctor, the waiter, the carpenter, the three fishermen—were commended to God at a farewell service in Bristol, and sailed from Liverpool on September 7th, 1850, in the barque *Ocean Queen*, which was to drop them at Tierra del Fuego.

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THEY WENT.

It was a strange wild land to which they went, this group of islands lying south of the Straits of Magellan, and terminating in Cape Horn. For besides the large, triangular shaped island of Tierra del Fuego, there are a number of smaller islands to the south and west. Staten Island, an uninhabited mass of rocky hills, lies east from the southern point; a stormy channel—Strait le Maire—lies between, through which the *Ocean Queen*, at the beginning of December, 1850, sailed with difficulty. Even the cheerful Richard Williams writes in his diary: "Surely Fuegia is a land of darkness, a scene of wild desolation, both land and climate agree in character—the one frowning and desolate, the other black and tempestuous." The Pacific side of Tierra del Fuego is

well wooded but very wet. The south wet and stormy. The south-east somewhat milder and dryer, but with heavy snowfalls. The north-east near the sea to-day provides good sheep-lands.

The islands were occupied by two tribes. On the north the Ona, men of good stature and well developed, often six feet tall or more. They were a people akin to



Ona Canoe.

the Patagonians, but when or how they crossed the Straits of Magellan has never been discovered. They were a land tribe and lived by hunting the guanaco and birds, and by picking up whatever they could find on the beach. Round about the western channels lived the Alacaluf, but of their history very little is known.

A third tribe were the Yahgans (canoe Indians), who lived on the beaches. Cannibals they have been called, but that they were not. Charles Darwin con-

sidered that the dwellers in one of the most dreary and forbidding places in the habitable globe were quite outside the pale of civilisation; he even wondered whether they had any articulate speech. In their inhospitable climate their lives were very hard indeed, they had not even the means of boiling water and when food supplies failed, they were at times reduced to eating their footgear and their rawhide thongs.

To such a people, living in such a land, went Allen Gardiner and his six companions. Ambassadors of Christ, bearing glad tidings of the Gospel of Peace.

THE LANDING.

On December 5th, 1850, the *Ocean Queen* anchored in Banner Roads, Picton Island, and the missionaries went ashore at once and sought a place to pitch their tents. No sooner, however, was everything ship-shape, than a party of natives approached in a threatening attitude, and Gardiner was compelled to withdraw to the *Ocean Queen* once more.

On December 18th the missionaries landed again, and built a stout wigwam of trees near the beach, with their two boats moored near at hand. Farewell was said to the Captain and crew of the *Ocean Queen*. Cheering letters were sent to the dear ones in England. The good ship weighed anchor, the friends and families at home in due course received the letters, and tried to hope for the best. Long and anxiously they waited for the next letters, but in vain. Not a word came from those

southern wilds till many months later, when the diaries of Captain Gardiner and Mr. Williams, preserved almost by miracle, enabled the world to trace out the tragedy which followed, almost day by day.

Yahgan Indian.

MISFORTUNES AND DISASTERS.

Misfortunes and disasters rapidly followed each other. Gardiner divided his party between the boats *Pioneer* and *Speedwell,* and set sail in search of some harbour on the north coast of the channel, where he might hide his heavy stores and refit the boats, for the *Pioneer* had developed a serious leak. The sea was rough and the wind high, the boats became separated, an anchor was lost, together with both the small boats used for landing, and a return to Banner Cove became imperative. A second expedition was equally fruitless. When repairing the

Pioneer it was discovered that through a fatal oversight the whole of their powder and shot had been left on board the *Ocean Queen*. They were therefore left without the means of defending themselves or of obtaining supplies of food.

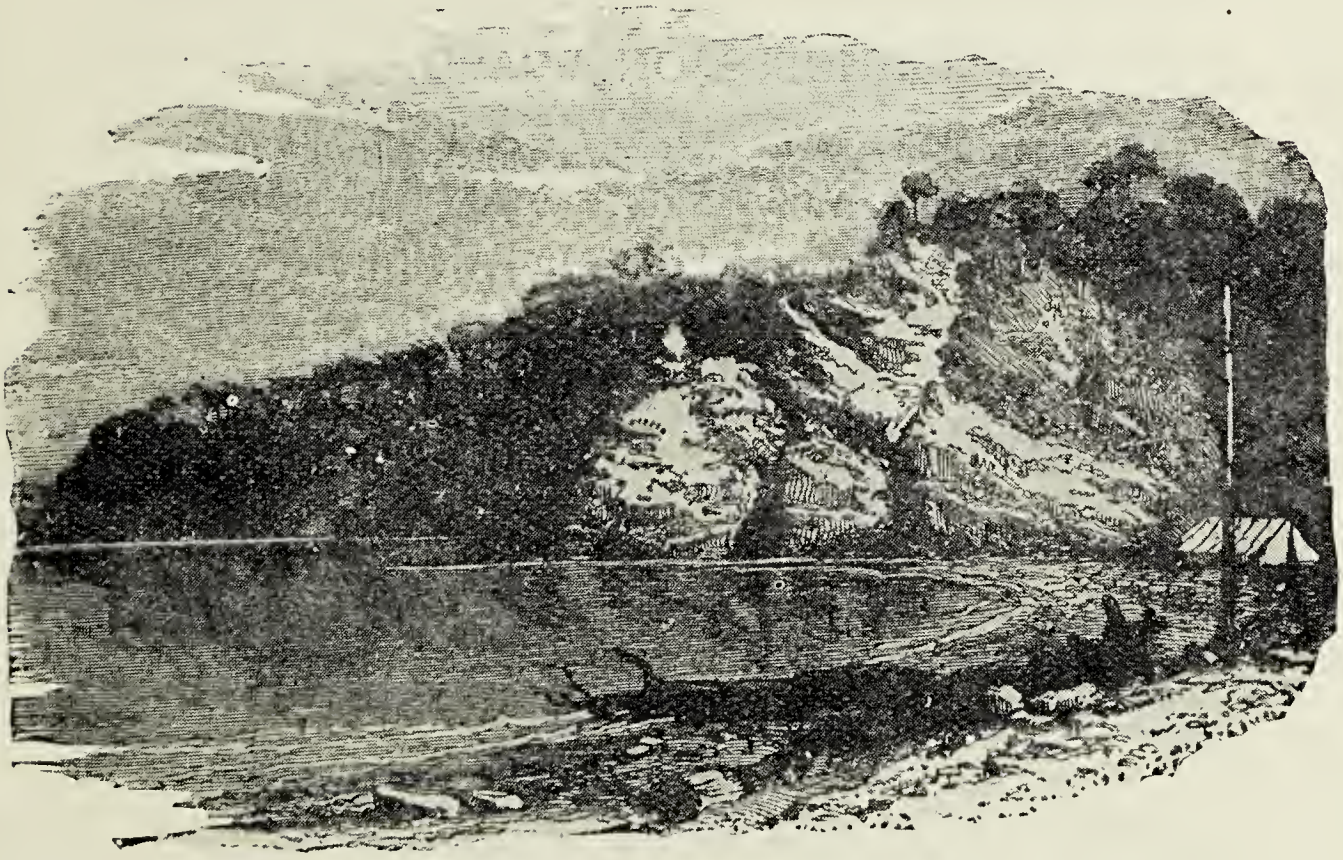
SPANIARD HARBOUR.

Then came a weary time—beating about among the islands, alarmed by every indication of the approach of the very people for whose sakes all this misery and hardship had been undertaken, the end of January found the party in Spaniard Harbour, on the east coast, between Picton and Staten Islands. Here on the night of January 31st, 1851, a terrible gale came on, completely wrecking the *Pioneer*, which had been hauled up on the beach to make a sleeping place for Gardiner and Maidment. Next night a storm of snow made the two men glad to seek shelter at the far end of a large cavern. Thus crippled in every way, with only one boat available for deep water, Captain Gardiner decided to remain where he was till the help which they expected should come, from either the Falkland Islands or from England. It was a fatal resolution. The expected help never came.

THE WEARY DAYS OF WAITING.

Soon after this decision, all power for active work came to an end. Mr. Williams first was taken ill, and then all the others, except the "iron-hearted" Captain him-

self, became more or less prostrated by scurvy, as the result of exposure and unsuitable food. By heroic effort, during March, the party managed to reach Banner Cove again, and recovered the provisions they had left behind them. They buried several bottles in



Spaniard Harbour.

various places, with boards of wood above them, on which was written "Look underneath." In each bottle was a paper bearing the words, "We are gone to Spaniard Harbour. . . . We have sickness on board. Our supplies are nearly out, and if not relieved soon, we shall be starved." They also painted on the rocks in two places, "You will find us in Spaniard Harbour."

Having returned to Spaniard Harbour, hope still buoyed them up. Captain Gardiner and Mr. Maidment lived in the wreck of the *Pioneer*; Mr. Williams, now very ill, with the others, remained in the *Speedwell*, in a sheltered cove a mile and a half away.

SICKNESS ON BOARD.

Their troubles increased. Sickness became prevalent. Provisions were terribly scarce. Winter—the winter of *such* a country—approached. In April there were frightful storms of wind and snow. In May the diary speaks of snow falling day by day, covering all around with its white mantle; and with this a daily succession of storms and winds. Gardiner and Maidment were driven by a terrible storm to seek safety for one awful night in the neighbouring cavern. Every possible method was employed for catching game or fish, but with small success.

THE SHADOWS DEEPEN.

The sailor, John Badcock, was the first to go. He lay alongside of Mr. Williams in the dark, close cabin of the *Speedwell*. When he felt that death drew near, he called on his companions to join in singing an old Methodist hymn. The dying man sang on to the end of the hymn, and a few minutes afterwards passed away. On August 23rd, Erwin, the carpenter, died; John Bryant went a few days later. Captain Gardiner was now con-

fined to bed, and Mr. Maidment was hardly able to walk. He had buried his two comrades, and never rallied from the physical strain. On August 27th, 1851, feeling his end approaching, Gardiner wrote farewell letters to his wife, son and daughter. To his son, in case he should ever become a missionary, he left instructions as to how he would have the mission carried on, and commended to his careful thought the British people in South America and the Indian tribes.

THE DYING FRIEND.

The brave Captain was probably the last survivor. On August 30th, he made a great effort to reach his dying friend, Mr. Williams, in the *Speedwell*. Mr. Maidment had constructed crutches for him out of two forked sticks, but his strength failed him, and he returned to the *Pioneer*, never to leave it again.

On September 3rd he records in pencil that Mr. Maidment had left him the day before, in search no doubt for food, but that he was in a very exhausted state and had not returned. He adds, " I cannot leave the place where I am, and know not whether he is in the body, or enjoying the presence of the Gracious God, whom he served so faithfully." On September 4th, he wrote in his diary, " There is now no room to doubt my dear fellow labourer has ceased from his earthly toils, and joined the company of the redeemed in the presence of the Lord."

THE LAST ENTRY IN THE DIARY.

The last entry is September 5th, 1851. "Great and marvellous are the loving kindnesses of my Gracious God unto me. He has preserved me hitherto, and for four days, although without food, without any feeling of hunger or thirst."

Here the diary ends, but one note was found written a day later, written to Mr. Williams in the belief that he still lived.

"My Dear Mr. Williams,

"The Lord has seen fit to call home another of our little company. Our dear departed brother left the boat on Tuesday at noon, and has not since returned; doubtless he is in the presence of his Redeemer, whom he served so faithfully. Yet a little while and through grace we may join that blessed throng to sing the praises of Christ through eternity. I neither hunger nor thirst, though five days without food! Marvellous loving kindness to me, a sinner!

"Your Affectionate Brother in Christ,

"Allen F. Gardiner.

"*September 6th*, 1851."

And thus we may believe that this noble spirit was gently released at last, spared the usual pangs of actual starvation. Surely the angels rejoiced, and "all the trumpets sounded for them on the other side," when

Gardiner and his devoted companions passed out of their "great tribulation" into the heavenly rest.

"THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS IS THE SEED OF THE CHURCH."

The heroic death of Gardiner and his companions accomplished what in life they had failed to do. Christian people at home, almost stunned by the terrible tidings, soon resolved that the dying wishes and prayers of the martyrs should not be forgotten. The last directions of Captain Gardiner were acted upon. The Mission which seemed to be at an end, its supporters crushed and dispirited, was revived by the heroic words of the acting Secretary, Mr. Despard, "With God's help the Mission shall be maintained."

In other booklets published by the South American Missionary Society is told the tale of the revived Patagonian Mission, a story that should be known to every Christian man and woman in England. To-day, two dioceses, the Falkland Islands, and Argentina and Eastern South America, each with their Bishop, and a long list of Chaplaincies, most of them self-supporting, prove that Gardiner's wish, that our own people should be cared for, has not been forgotten. The heroic work among the Indians of the Paraguayan Chaco is an epic of modern missionary history. The work in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos would rejoice Captain Allen Gardiner's heart, could he see it. In Chile his name is honoured in the Araucanian Indian Mission. In Argentina an

orphanage for British children bears his name. There is much indeed to cheer, but there is still much to do, and the work of the South American Missionary Society is still needed in this mighty continent.

The Society has recently extended its work in several directions, and hopes under God to move forward to hitherto untouched parts of the great interior, where "generations yet unborn" shall bless the name and memory of ALLEN GARDINER.

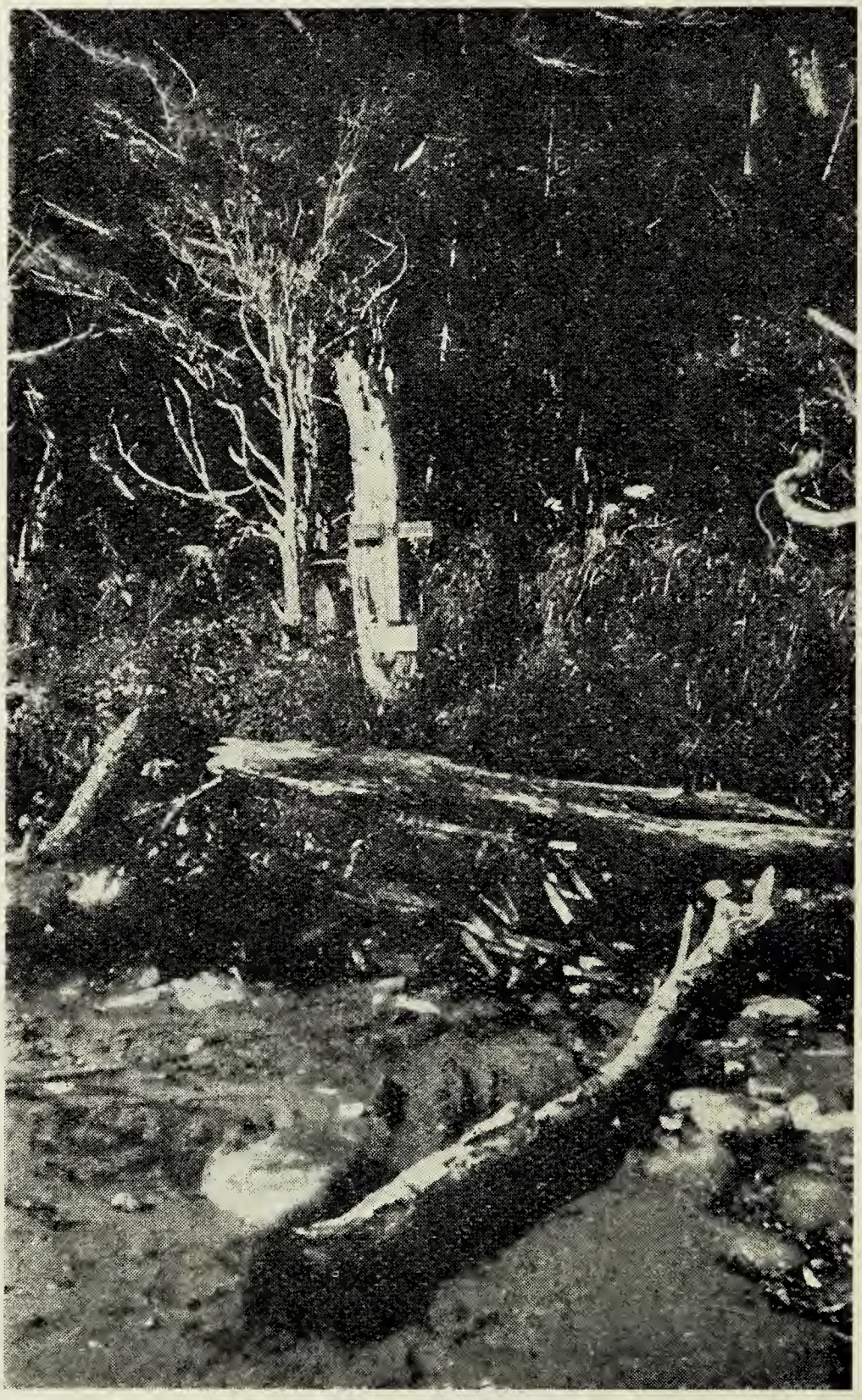
The previous pages suggest three questions

that wait for an answer from every reader.

1. Why should not I have some share in winning these races for Christ the King of men?
2. How can I, endowed with material, intellectual, and spiritual powers, the better use these gifts for the good of others and the greater glory of God?
3. How can I best show my love and devotion to Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen Lord?

These questions can be answered in the most practical manner by helping the South American Missionary Society in one or other of the following ways :—

1. By praying earnestly for the success of the work of the Society.
2. By becoming a Subscriber to the Society.
3. By acting as a Local Honorary Secretary, and arousing interest in the work of the Society in your District.
4. By joining the League of Service in connection with the Society, and assisting this body of helpers in any way possible.
5. By having the Monthly Magazine, *S.A.M.S. at Work*, regularly, and getting friends to have it also.
6. By taking a Collecting-Box.
7. By finding out if I am able to go out or not.



Last resting-place of Capt. Allen F. Gardiner.

PUBLICATIONS.

The Monthly Magazine, "S.A.M.S. at Work." 2d. per copy ; 2/6 per annum, post free.
The Annual Report. 6d.
Both free to Subscribers of not less than one pound.
Quotation Calendar. 1/- each. Cost of inserting a Quotation, 1/-.

BOOKS.

An Unknown People in an Unknown Land. A thrilling account of Missionary Pioneering among the Chaco Indians. By W. Barbrooke Grubb, F.R.G.S. 6/- net. ; postage 6d.
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Barbrooke Grubb of Paraguay. 1/- net ; postage 2d.

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BOOKLETS at 3d. each.

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The Indian Tribes of the Paraguayan Chaco.
Captain Allen Gardiner.
Bishop Stirling.

BOOKLETS at 2d. each.

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